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1. INDOCHINA: De Lattre urgently requests aid--The US Military Attaché in Saigon transmits a request from General de Lattre, French High Commissioner for Indochina, that his need for French troops and materiel in Indochina be brought to the attention of General Eisenhower and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. De Lattre most urgently requests that Eisenhower advise French Premier Pleven to furnish these troops and materiel because of his conviction that: (a) the USSR will strike in Western Europe only after the Asian flank is positively secured, and troops in Indochina will "buy time" for the formation of armies in Western Europe; (b) holding Tonkin, the gateway to Southeast Asia, would prevent the Chinese Communist forces from overrunning the entire continent and advancing the Soviet opportunity to seize Europe; (c) the troops and materiel requested represent the capability for successful tenure against the entire Viet Minh forces, plus four Chinese Communist armies (the estimated maximum which could be committed and supplied, considering the present Chinese commitment in Korea); and (d) the time gained for the formation of a Vietnamese Army might conceivably permit the return of metropolitan troops to France in 16 to 18 months. De Lattre told the MA that he would personally present the request to Pleven during February and reiterated emphatically that he would resign his command if his request is refused.

The MA comments he is convinced the requested reinforcements are adequate and necessary for the accomplishment of de Lattre's mission; he also considers that since de Lattre's assumption of command in Indochina, the combat efficiency, general morale, and operational adaptability

DIA review completed.

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of the troops have greatly improved. The Attache reports a discussion with de Lattre's planning chief, Colonel Boffre, concerning the formation of the Vietnamese Army, stating that this is the first time the concept of a Vietnamese Army was so definitely expressed by a responsible official.

EUROPE

25X1

2. FINLAND: Possible indicators of Soviet plans to attack-- The Department of the Army has advised the US Military Attache in Helsinki that the recent Soviet propaganda attack on Finland, as well as Soviet military interest in the Scandinavian area, warrants giving special attention to all information indicating any possibility of a Soviet attack on Finland. In this connection, the Department lists as recent indications: the rumors both of Soviet interest in Finnish mobilization plans and of their desire for radar installations in Finland, Soviet purchase of maps of Scandinavian waters and Finland, East German reconnaissance of Scandinavian ports, the November sabotage incident in Norway, and the identification of Marshal Meretskov, the wartime Soviet commander of the northern front, as commander of the White Sea military district.

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